

The Race Film Industry and the Black American Identity in the Early 20th Century

Angie Pierre

WHAT THE NATION SAYS OF THE
LINCOLN PRODUCTIONS

Princ. Moten, Tuskegee, —"You do not know how much pleasure and satisfaction our Institute community received from the showing of your two productions."

Hon. R. R. Church, Jr., Memphis.—"Your two pictures shown at my Theatre week of March 26, are the best Negro pictures I have ever seen. I have been disgusted with most Negro pictures until I saw yours. I unhesitatingly endorse both."

Mme. C. J. Walker, Indianapolis.—"While in New Orleans I saw your "Trooper of Troop K" and it was most inspiring as well as the most realistic photo-play I have ever seen."

Seev. E. Scott, Tuskegee.—"Personally all of us here were very pleased and gratified. I feel quite sure that our Institute shall be most anxious to have the same two pictures shown next year to our student body."

F. R. Ransom, Atty. Madam C. J. Walker Mfg. Co., Ind.—"I am writing to advise that Mme. Walker has been deeply impressed by your photo-plays and she has authorized me to make out the enclosed check."

Motion Picture News, —"The Lincoln organization is the only one in the world making Negro subjects, and they have found a good market for their releases."

Los Angeles New Age, —"Hundreds of people witnessed the initial exhibition and scores were turned away."

Kansas City Sun, —"Successful Race Photo-play a focus at National Negro Business League."

Chicago Defender, —"The demand for "The Realization" and the "Trooper of Troop K" has grown to such an extent that there are now ten copies working daily and the company is adding reprints as fast as they can be produced. The third release is now on its way."

Tuskegee Student, —"The Institute Chapel was filled to capacity. The two pictures, both of which present the better side of life among the Colored people, make a very strong appeal, in contrast with the burlesque type we are accustomed to see in plays presented by other companies."

Dallas Express, —"Greatest Negro production ever shown on screen."

What are Race Films?

Though there might be various definitions of race films, they are films created for a Black audience with a black cast, producer, director, writer, or cast. Race films can be created by white directors, producers, or writers.

What was uplift cinema and who was the target audience?

Uplift cinema is a movement in the beginning of the 20th century that focused on displaying a more accurate and positive portrayal of Black Americans in cinema. It prioritized representing Black American as **humans** who have separate and distinct identities but share a collective culture and history. It also functioned to reject the narrative, stereotypes, and scientific racism of the early 20th century. Uplift cinema's target was not only Black Americans but White Americans as well. It wanted to present these images to Americans in order to disprove the contemporary theory.

Who contributed to uplift?

Contribution to uplift cinema was not limited to anyone of a specific race or class. Many prominent individuals and film companies contributed and created many uplift films. The most prominent are:

Booker T. Washington

Oscar Micheaux

Historical Feature Films and Ebony Motion Picture

Lincoln Motion Picture Company.

How does uplift relate to Black identity?

Uplift focuses on presenting the individual and diverse identity of its black audience. It seeks to reject the stereotypical identity that is portrayed in science and media of the time period. It also demonstrates how others, ones who produced uplift films, view black identity.



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA

EBONY FILM CANCELLED

Phoenix Theatre Manager Refuses to Use Degrading Movie

YOUR OPPORTUNITY

To obtain this we could borrow from the white banking houses by mortgaging our plant, etc., but we would rather ask a few members of our Race who want to make a SAFE and GOOD INVESTMENT to join us in increasing our production by taking up some of our capital stock. To this LIMITED NUMBER we offer a very attractive opportunity. We offer this stock for the present at its par value, \$1.00 per share.

The stock we offer you is common stock of the Company, our only issue, full profit sharing; carrying voting power and NON-ASSESSABLE. We do not guarantee that this price will remain as quoted long. To insure getting the low price of \$1.00 per share, Act at once!

How You Can Buy Lincoln Motion Picture Stock

If you can't pay cash in full for your stock at a ten per cent discount, you can purchase it on the following terms:
10 Shares (\$1.00 per share) \$2.50 down, \$1.00 per month for seven and one-half months.
20 Shares (\$1.00 per share) \$5.00 down, and \$2.00 per month for seven and one-half months.
50 Shares (\$1.00 per share) \$12.50 down and \$5.00 per month for seven and one-half months.
100 Shares (\$1.00 per share) \$25.00 down and \$10.00 per month for seven and one-half months.

LINCOLN MOTION PICTURE CO., Inc.
Dept. _____ Los Angeles, Calif.
Date _____

Gentlemen:
Subject to your acceptance, I herewith enclose \$ _____ as payment in part for _____ shares, fully paid and non-assessable, of the Common Capital Stock of the Lincoln Motion Picture Co., Inc.
Name _____
Address _____

Mail Coupon (with remittance) to 1103 Central Ave., Los Angeles, Cal.